

DRESS CODE

1. PURPOSE:

To establish policy, procedures, and responsibilities for attire, personal hygiene, and grooming in the Health Care System's professional health care environment. This policy covers all VA NWIHCS employees (full and part-time), work-study, residents, students, contract personnel, and volunteers while on official status in the Health Care System.

2. POLICY:

Each employee's personal appearance contributes to the overall image of the Health Care System as a provider of quality health care. It is the policy of this Health Care System that personal appearance and grooming will be neat, clean, and appropriate for the professional health care environment to facilitate care and concern for patients, family members, and the public.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a. Service Chiefs and Supervisors are responsible for explaining the policy and assuring that employees meet standards of personal appearance in the work environment. Most employees automatically do this and dress in a manner that displays their competence and their respect for patients, fellow employees, and the public. For employees needing more guidance, the information contained in this policy will be helpful.
- b. Employees are responsible for complying with the guidelines contained in this policy memorandum. They should be aware of dress expectations for their work area and strive to meet those expectations. If employees have questions about the appropriateness of any particular dress item, they should discuss it with their supervisor and/or union representative.

4. PROCEDURES:

- a. Employees are expected to present the right appearance to foster a professional consumer-oriented environment.
- b. Employees are expected to wear appropriate attire and/or uniforms in all patient care and public contact areas. Employees required to wear uniforms will wear the complete uniform while in duty status as directed in FAC-040, Employee Uniforms.
- c. The following examples of clothing are NOT considered appropriate:
 - 1) Shorts--Shorts are not appropriate dress in our Health Care System. Skirts/skorts may be worn that are not more than three inches above the knee.

2) Pants

- a) Blue denim jeans are not permitted for employees assigned to any area that has direct patient contact or contact with the public. Jeans may be worn when the Director or designee grants a waiver (e.g., Combined Federal Campaign promotion or casual days).
- b) Sweatpants are not appropriate dress in our Health Care System.

3) Shirts--No t-shirts or sweatshirts with inappropriate slogans, spaghetti straps, tank tops, or halter tops will be worn in the Health Care System, unless worn under other garments, such as dresses, jumpers, or jackets. Low-cut shirts and/or midriffs are not appropriate.

4) Shoes--Shoes should be clean, safe, and compatible with the hospital environment and assigned duties. Flip-flops and/or thong sandals are not appropriate.

5) Name Badges--Identification badges must be worn at all times with the employee's name and photograph clearly visible.

6) Religious Exceptions--Reasonable accommodations may be made on an individual basis for employees with properly documented religious needs. Requests with supporting documentation should be submitted to the employee's Service Chief.

d. Service Chiefs and Supervisors--Service Chiefs and Supervisors are responsible for explaining this policy to their employees and for assuring employees in the work environment are meeting the standards of personal appearance. Supervisors will follow the procedures described in the compliance section of this policy.

e. Compliance

- 1) When employees are in conflict with the established dress code policy, a good faith effort will be made by the employee and supervisor to resolve the conflict at the lowest level. Employees will be offered an appropriate uniform for their work area for the day in order to be compliant.
- 2) If necessary, supervisors may authorize administrative leave sufficient for an employee to go home and return in compliance for the first offense, and annual leave for each subsequent offense.
- 3) If the parties are unable to resolve the conflict or non-compliance becomes habitual, counseling and/or progressive discipline will be conducted as appropriate.

5. REFERENCES:

FAC-040, Employee Uniforms

Manual M-1, Part VII, Chapter 8, Employee Uniforms

6. RESCISSION:

DIR-012 dated July 25, 2008.

7. DATE OF COMPLETE REISSUANCE:

July 2014.

8. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:

Human Resources.

9. NEEDED CONCURRENCES:

AFGE 2219 (LN)

AFGE 2270 (OM)

AFGE 2601 (GI)

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

10. KEY WORDS:

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PROFESSIONAL

APPEARANCE

APPROPRIATENESS

NANCY A. GREGORY, FACHE
Acting Director